

between Richard and his nobles, the uncontrolled passions of the whole royal family, were signs that the Commons read with a heavy heart, for it was not hard to see that the ship of State was fast drifting towards the breakers. The Lower House took no action about the friar. The knights and burgesses feared to come 'between the pass and fell-incensed points of mighty opposites.' Their only important step was to lodge complaints of the anarchy of the country, the violence of great men and the perversion of justice by maintenance. The Duke of Lancaster took upon himself to reply in the name of the nobility that * the lords were powerful enough to punish their retainers for committing such excesses.' The Commons had nothing by this answer. If the nobility were powerful enough to keep their men in order, why did they not do so? Being unable to get support from the King or satisfaction from the lords, the knights held their peace. When this most unsatisfactory of Parliaments came to an end, all parties left Salisbury with feelings of mutual suspicion and hatred.¹

The next trial of strength between the King and his uncle took place in August, when John of Northampton, late Mayor of London, was brought to justice before the King at Beading. In order to understand this event it is necessary to go back a little in the history of the great city. Ever since the Peasants' Revolt, London had been the battle-ground of rival factions, among whom the King and the Duke each had supporters. Richard's friends were found among the great merchants of the victualling trades, especially among the fishmongers and the grocers. The latter body, founded in 1345 by a union of the spicers and pepperers, had not been long in arousing by their success the jealousy of their fellow-citizens. The fishmongers were a scarcely less powerful body. Their chief was Walworth, and the chief of the grocers was Nicholas Brembre. These two men, ever since the occupation of London by the rebels, had been the friends of Richard, whose throne and life they had done so much to preserve

¹ Wals., ii. 114-5 ; Higden, ix. 40-1; *Rot. ParL*, iii. 166 *et segr.*